
Barbara Tenorio-Grimes—Providing science opportunities to minorities

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Barbara Tenorio-Grimes a Strong Supporter of the Benefits of Education

Tracing their roots back to the first Native Americans that lived in Northern New Mexico more than 800 years ago, the members of San Felipe Pueblo are proud of their ancient origin and cling to traditions. Raised on this Pueblo, the very challenges that were omnipresent—unemployment, poverty, poor health—inspired Barbara Tenorio-Grimes to look beyond the hills of her community for a means to improve herself and the lives of her people.

A new world

Tenorio-Grimes found the college environment to be unfamiliar and disconnected, nothing like her traditional community in which many still spoke the Native Keresan language daily and individualism was not rewarded. Overcoming many obstacles, she pursued a graduate degree in education, determined to use it to help other minorities achieve the same success. A foot firmly in both worlds, Tenorio-Grimes is the Los Alamos tribal education liaison, supporting science education outreach and minority student recruitment. For more than 20 years, she has built effective partnerships between tribal and federal governments, providing a cultural bridge between the seemingly disparate domains.

Helping others achieve greatness

A strong supporter of the benefits of education in science, math and engineering, Tenorio-Grimes led development of the Lab's educational outreach programs for K-12 students and teachers. She has recruited and mentored many students and interns from across many cultures, often providing free housing to them in her home. In one example, Tenorio-Grimes recruited Fawn Coriz, an undergraduate student raised and living on a nearby Pueblo. Today, Coriz is a chemical engineer and group leader at the Lab. Praised for her character, courage and commitment, Tenorio-Grimes is a recipient of this year's Los Alamos Women Who Inspire awards. She has also received community service awards multiple times from the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and she serves on its board of directors.

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